



MAYNOOTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN NOTES



May 2018



Get Ireland Cycling Strategy Meeting

On March 6th, Sport Ireland held a strategy meeting on *Get Ireland Cycling*. Although, organised by Sport Ireland, the meeting was about everyday cycling rather than cycling as a sport. It was attended by senior officials from Healthy Ireland and the Departments of Health and Transport along with Road Authorities, Local Sports Partnerships and members of An Garda Síochána which shows that cycling/bicycling is moving up the Irish political agenda.

The keynote speaker was Angela van der Kloof, a Dutch consultant who is familiar with Ireland and is a Cycling Expert with the Dutch Cycling Embassy. She said “*unless you have a coherent network of segregated cycle tracks/path criss-crossing urban areas you will not get more people cycling*” and in relation to the lack of children cycling in Ireland, she emphasised that “*Children are precious and must be protected from fast traffic*”. We would concur with these views. Maynooth needs a network of cycle facilities not a corridor.

World Bicycle Day - June 3rd

Bicycles continue to move up the political agenda worldwide also. The United Nations has declared June 3rd as International World Bicycle Day, by adopting a resolution to that effect on April 12th 2018, during the 72nd Regular Session of the UN General Assembly, in New York.

The resolution was adopted by a consensus of 193 member states. The declaration invites all Member States and relevant stakeholders to celebrate and promote awareness of the World Bicycle Day. The declaration encourages Member States to devote particular attention to the bicycle in cross-cutting development strategies and to include the bicycle in international, regional, national and local development policies and programmes. The European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) welcomed this resolution with the Secretary General Dr. Bernhard Ensink stating “*Cycling is a source for social, economic and environmental benefits – and it is bringing people together. This UN declaration is an acknowledgment of the contribution of cycling to 12 of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs)*”.

Climate Change

On the subject of sustainability, air pollution in Ireland is deteriorating at an alarming rate, according to the latest 'Air Pollutant Emissions' 2016 published by the EPA.

Nitrogen oxides, is one of a number of extremely dangerous classes of air pollutants, which exceeded EU safe limits in 2016. Transport (41%) and agriculture (29.6%) were the largest Irish sources. Health impacts of nitrogen oxides include diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma.

Meeting of Maynooth Planning Alliance

There was discussion about planning issues at the public meeting of the Maynooth Planning Alliance in April. Most of the discussions centred on traffic congestion with several drivers complaining about delays due to other people in cars. The elephant in the room (which was not mentioned) is that there are too many cars used too often and that new roads generate more traffic. All political parties, all governments since the 1990s and county councils are in favour of sustainable and active modes of travel.

Maynooth Cycling Campaign is a non-party political cycling advocacy group. Further information on meetings and activities is available on our website.

We are affiliated to Cyclist.ie, the Irish Cyclist Advocacy Network and through it to the European Cycling Federation.